



STATE OF INDIANA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
State House, Second Floor
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr.
Governor

November 16, 2005

Mr. David Paulison
Acting Director
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street NW
Washington, D. C. 20202

Through:

Edward G. Buikema
Regional Director
FEMA Region V
563 South Clark Street, 6th Floor
Chicago, IL 60605-1521

Dear Acting Director Paulison:

As you know, on November 6, 2005, Indiana suffered its third most deadly tornado occurrence in the state's history. Twenty-four Hoosiers lost their lives and hundreds of homes were severely damaged or destroyed in Warrick and Vanderburgh counties. I appreciate the President's recent major disaster declaration that made residents with significant losses in those counties eligible for immediate individual federal disaster relief.

I am writing now to request supplemental federal disaster relief available under FEMA's Public Assistance Program. The primary need for assistance is reimbursement for costs sustained during the immediate response effort (Category B) as well as expenses being incurred with the clean-up and removal of debris in the disaster areas (Category A). Federal assistance is necessary to assist southwestern Indiana with a swift and successful reconstruction process.

Warrick County has sustained the most significant qualifying costs to date. The FEMA preliminary damage assessment estimated that contractual costs for debris removal alone were \$5.12 million. This cost equals \$94.48 per capita, an overwhelming figure for any community. Without outside support, debris clean-up would take several months to complete and severely delay the important process of immediately beginning to repair and rebuild damaged neighborhoods and properties.

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I understand that FEMA, as required by federal regulations, will deduct any costs for individual insurance policy holder allocations for debris removal. As you can appreciate, these reimbursements are not only unknown but impossible to determine at this time. Rest assured, the state and counties will judiciously seek to identify all insurance proceeds from homeowners that will reduce the federal costs, but that amount is dependent on how the insurance settlements are made to the homeowners. If debris removal is not specified in the settlements, it may be impossible to discern the entire amount owed to area homeowners.

Vanderburgh County also sustained significant property damage and substantial public costs as a result. The damage to Eastbrook Mobile Home Park was unprecedented. Of the approximately 300 homes contained in the park, 138 were totally destroyed with another 77 sustaining some form of serious damage. While most of this damage is on private property, it is in the best interest of the community to remove and repair the damage in this area immediately to eliminate conditions that continue to pose an imminent threat to public health and safety.

Vanderburgh County officials are still in the process of developing a comprehensive course of action for the clean-up and remediation of this site. Therefore, although the initial FEMA PDA costs of \$1.5 million may not meet FEMA's initial qualifying requirements, those estimates are likely to increase. FEMA should also consider the unique circumstances of Vanderburgh County to undertake a major reconstruction effort at this time.

In the past year, Vanderburgh County suffered over \$700,000 in losses as the result of flood, wind and tornado damages that did not qualify for public assistance in prior federal disaster declarations. For instance, Vanderburgh County missed the threshold under FEMA's formula by only \$50,000 in one recent declaration. All together, in less than twelve months, the county has responded to and recovered from three separate natural disaster events without qualifying for public assistance. It is unreasonable to expect the county to bear the additional costs created by the most recent disaster alone.

As you undoubtedly noticed in your recent visit to the area, support from the public has been overwhelming. Volunteers have turned out in numbers never before seen to assist in the immediate response and recovery efforts. Forty-nine volunteer fire departments from around the region and over three hundred firefighters responded to Vanderburgh County alone. The response costs documented in Vanderburgh County thus far are over \$300,000 and continue to rise as officials collect costs from those responders.

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Similarly, surrounding counties and cities have been assisting Warrick County in its debris removal efforts. All of these continuing efforts have been on a voluntary basis thus far and the in-kind costs have not yet been determined. In addition to these efforts, numerous private individuals and organizations from throughout the area and the state have assisted and continue to assist Warrick County in the debris removal efforts. These in-kind costs have also not been determined. Warrick County's estimated response costs alone have been documented to be \$442,852 or over \$8.25 per capita. Debris costs combined with the response costs bring the total per-capita cost to \$103.74.

There are other pressing reasons for additional federal assistance in the clean-up phase of this disaster. The residents of Vanderburgh and Warrick counties face serious threats to their health and safety caused by this debris. The State Fire Marshal determined that the fire threat in these counties is extremely high. Due to this fire threat, the Warrick County Commissioners issued a public ban on open burning over the past weekend. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources also issued a "high hazard" fire threat for the forested areas in that part of the state. Numerous grass and wild fires are presently occurring in the southern half of Indiana. These continuing fire threats demonstrate the need for the speedy removal of tornado debris in both counties.

The state has also incurred significant costs in coordinating the response and recovery efforts that have taken place. As discussed in my initial disaster designation request to President Bush, all available state resources were immediately dedicated to the response and recovery efforts in both counties.

The Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) has continually provided overall direction and control of the response and recovery effort since the date of the tornado. The State Emergency Operating Center has remained open to receive and respond to requests for assistance.

The Indiana National Guard (ING) committed 130 personnel to assist in the immediate response effort. These personnel assisted in search and rescue and helped secure affected neighborhoods in both counties to prevent looting. Additionally, ING aviation units assisted in initial damage assessment efforts and transported state emergency management personnel to the scene.

The Indiana State Police (ISP) supported local security efforts, manning check points and providing roving patrols in the affected areas. ISP aviation units also assisted in the damage assessment process and transported state emergency management personnel to the disaster area.

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The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) immediately committed personnel and equipment to open the affected state highways. Upon completion of this task, INDOT has assisted county transportation officials with their local efforts to remove debris from county roads. These efforts are continuing.

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) has personnel on-scene to assist with debris disposal and storage issues. IDEM is also addressing air and water quality issues.

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) sustained damage to one of its properties, the Angel Mounds State Park facility that is located directly adjacent to the Eastbrook Mobile Home Park in Vanderburgh County. The state park received a direct hit from the tornado causing damage to facilities and forest areas. Additionally, the state park received tremendous amounts of debris generated from the devastation at the mobile home park. IDNR conservation officers have also provided law enforcement support in both Vanderburgh and Warrick Counties. Finally, the agency's sawyer crews were activated to provide immediate assistance to Warrick County in its debris removal efforts.

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) coordinated the provision of health services within the affected areas. This included the distribution of public health guidance materials and the administration of tetanus shots in both counties.

In addition to the damages sustained in Vanderburgh and Warrick Counties, numerous areas throughout the state sustained damage from this same storm system. The storm system swept through the entire state, causing damage to private and public facilities, including Rural Electric Cooperatives and municipal owned power utilities. Some costs have been documented to date, however a concentrated effort has only begun to identify these damages statewide.

Joint state/federal preliminary damage assessments have been conducted and the results are included with this letter as attachment A.

I certify that for this major disaster, the state and local governments will assume all applicable non-federal share of costs required by the Stafford Act.

Pursuant to Sections 403 and 407 of the Stafford Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5170b & 5173, the State agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the United States of America for any claims arising from the removal of debris or wreckage for this disaster. The State agrees that debris removal from public and private property will not occur until the landowner signs an unconditional authorization for the removal of debris.

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In my previous letter to President Bush, I mentioned the likely event that after damage assessments were completed, Indiana would seek all additional support available under the Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs offered by FEMA. While damage assessments continue at this time, federal and state survey teams have already verified over eight million dollars in damages and that amount is likely to rise.

Therefore, I am requesting that the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program be implemented state-wide and the Public Assistance Program be implemented for Warrick and Vanderburgh counties. I appreciate your consideration of this request and continued support of Indiana's ongoing disaster relief efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. E. Daniel", followed by a large, stylized flourish or checkmark-like stroke.